

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. An image forming device consumable monitoring method
2 comprising:

3 storing information regarding a plurality of consumables usable by an
4 image forming device to form hard images, wherein the stored information for an
5 individual one of the consumables includes a stored consumable identifier which
6 identifies the respective consumable and a stored party identifier utilized to identify
7 a proper party of the respective consumable;

8 receiving information regarding a consumable to be verified including a
9 received consumable identifier which identifies the consumable to be verified and
10 a received party identifier utilized to identify the proper party associated with the
11 consumable to be verified;

12 comparing the received consumable identifier with at least one of the
13 stored consumable identifiers; and

14 comparing the received party identifier with at least one of the stored
15 party identifiers.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising forwarding a message
2 to the proper party of the respective consumable responsive to the comparings.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising forwarding a command
2 to an image forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified to disable
3 at least one operation of the image forming device coupled with the consumable
4 to be verified responsive to the comparings.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising forwarding a warning
2 message to an image forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified
3 responsive to the comparings.

1 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising recording the received
2 consumable identifier, the received party identifier, and date and time information
3 regarding the reception of the received information.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving the received party
2 identifier comprises receiving a received device identifier which identifies the image
3 forming device which communicated the information and wherein the storing
4 comprises storing the stored party identifier comprising at least one stored device
5 identifier which identifies an image forming device associated with the proper party
6 for the respective consumable and wherein the comparing the received party
7 identifier comprises comparing the received device identifier with the stored device
8 identifier.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the storing the stored party
2 identifier comprises storing a plurality of stored device identifiers and the comparing
3 the received party identifier comprises comparing the received device identifier with
4 the plurality of stored device identifiers.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving the received party
2 identifier comprises receiving the received party identifier which directly identifies
3 the proper party of the respective consumable.

1 9. A consumable monitoring system comprising:
2 a database configured to store information regarding a plurality of
3 consumables usable by an image forming device to form hard images, wherein the
4 stored information for an individual one of the consumables includes a stored
5 consumable identifier which identifies the respective consumable, and a stored
6 party identifier utilized to identify a proper party associated with the respective
7 consumable;

8 an interface adapted to receive information regarding a consumable to be
9 verified including a received consumable identifier which identifies the consumable
10 to be verified and a received party identifier utilized to identify the proper party
11 associated with the consumable to be verified; and
12 processing circuitry configured to compare the received consumable
13 identifier with the stored consumable identifier and to compare the received party
14 identifier with the stored party identifier.

1 10. The system of claim 9 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to forward a message to the proper party associated with the respective
3 consumable responsive to the comparisons.

1 11. The system of claim 9 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to forward a command to disable at least one operation of an image
3 forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified responsive to the
4 comparison.

1 12. The system of claim 9 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to forward a warning message to an image forming device coupled with
3 the consumable to be verified responsive to the comparison.

1 13. The system of claim 9 further comprising a memory device, and
2 wherein the processing circuitry is configured to forward the received consumable
3 identifier, the received party identifier, and date and time information regarding the
4 reception of the received consumable identifier and the received party identifier to
5 the memory device for storage.

1 14. The system of claim 9 wherein the interface is adapted to receive
2 the information regarding the consumable to be verified including the received party
3 identifier comprising a received device identifier which identifies the image forming
4 device which communicated the information and wherein the database is
5 configured to store the stored party identifier comprising at least one stored device
6 identifier which identifies an image forming device associated with the proper party
7 for the respective consumable and wherein the processing circuitry is configured
8 to compare the received device identifier with the stored device identifier to
9 compare the received party identifier with the stored party identifier.

1 15. The system of claim 14 wherein the database is configured to
2 store the stored party identifier comprising a plurality of stored device identifiers
3 which identify a plurality of image forming devices associated with the proper party
4 of the respective consumable, and wherein the processing circuitry is configured
5 to compare the received device identifier with the stored device identifiers.

1 16. The system of claim 9 wherein the interface is adapted to receive
2 the information regarding the consumable to be verified including the received party
3 identifier which directly identifies the proper party of the respective consumable.

1 17. An image forming device comprising:
2 an image engine configured to use a consumable to form a hard image;
3 processing circuitry coupled with the image engine and configured to
4 formulate an identifier message including a party identifier utilized to identify a
5 party associated with image forming device and an identifier of the consumable,
6 and wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to control communication
7 of the identifier message; and
8 an interface adapted to communicate externally of the image forming
9 device and to communicate the identifier message.

1 18. The device of claim 17 wherein the interface is adapted to receive
2 a command responsive to the communication of the identifier message, and the
3 processing circuitry is configured to disable at least one operation of the image
4 forming device with respect to formation of hard images responsive to receiving the
5 command.

1 19. The device of claim 17 wherein the interface is adapted to receive
2 a warning message responsive to the communication of the identifier message, and
3 the processing circuitry is configured to control communication of the warning
4 message using the image forming device responsive to receiving the warning
5 message.

1 20. The device of claim 17 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to formulate the identifier message including the party identifier which
3 identifies the image forming device.

1 21. The device of claim 17 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to formulate the identifier message including the party identifier which
3 directly identifies the party associated with the image forming device.

1 22. The device of claim 17 wherein the processing circuitry is
2 configured to detect coupling of the consumable with the image forming device and
3 to control the communication of the identifier message responsive to the detection
4 of the coupling.

1 23. The device of claim 17 wherein the image engine comprises a print
2 engine.

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